

# CITY OF OAK POINT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY POLICE OPERATIONAL POLICIES and PROCEDURES

## **POLICY: 7.19 PRISONER TRANSPORTATION**

**REVISED DATE: 09.30.2020**

### **I. POLICY**

Transportation of persons in custody is a constant requirement and a frequent activity. Transportation usually occurs in two instances. The first is immediately after arrest when the arrestee is taken by the arresting officer for booking and holding or transfer to another facility. The second concerns the movement of prisoners from a detention facility, such as the county jail, to a hospital, doctor, dentist, or other medical facility, to court, and for other reasons. Transporting prisoners is a potentially dangerous function. Therefore, it is the policy of this law enforcement agency to take the precautions necessary while transporting prisoners to protect the lives and safety of officers, the public, and the person in custody.

### **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures to ensure that prisoners are transported safely.

### **III. PROCEDURES**

#### **A. General**

1. Unless no other type of vehicle is available, all prisoners shall be transported in secure, caged vehicles.
2. In no case shall a juvenile known or believed to be under the age of 17 years be transported with adults suspected of or charged with criminal acts.
3. When picking up a prisoner from any facility, the officer shall verify the identity of the prisoner.

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4. The transporting officer shall obtain from the custodian of the prisoner any paperwork, property, or medical records that should accompany the transfer of the prisoner.

### B. Searching the prisoner

1. The transporting officer shall always search a prisoner before placing him or her into the vehicle. Officers must never assume that a prisoner does not possess a weapon or contraband or that someone else has already searched the prisoner. The transporting officer shall conduct a search of the prisoner each time the prisoner enters custody of the officer.
2. When handling and searching prisoners, officers shall remain mindful of the department's infectious diseases exposure control plan and shall use personal protective equipment when necessary.
3. Any items removed from the prisoner prior to transport will be securely maintained and returned to the prisoner or turned in to the booking officer upon arrival at the location of detention for placement in the prisoner's property. (TBP: 10.10)

### C. Searching the police vehicle

The transporting officer shall search the vehicle immediately before each prisoner transport to ensure that no weapons or contraband are available to the prisoner. Further, after delivering the prisoner to his or her destination, officers shall again search the police vehicle to ensure that the prisoner did not hide contraband or other evidence.

### D. Transport equipment

1. Most marked vehicles are equipped with a metal or plastic screen separating the front and rear compartments. Normally, these

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vehicles will be used in all prisoner transports in order to prevent prisoner access to the driver's compartment.

2. All vehicles equipped with metal screen barriers and used in transporting prisoners have the rear interior door and window handles removed in order to minimize the risk of escape by prisoners while transporting.
3. Vehicles used for transporting prisoners should be checked for proper security measures and any contraband at the beginning of each shift and before transporting prisoners.

### E. Positioning of prisoners in the transport vehicle

1. When an officer transports a prisoner in a caged vehicle, the prisoner shall be positioned in the rear seat and secured with seat belts. Prisoners shall be handcuffed with their hands behind their backs, palms together, except for the exceptions detailed in Policy 7.20.
2. When a single officer transports a prisoner in a non-caged vehicle, the prisoner shall be placed in the right front seat and secured with a seat belt. The prisoner shall be handcuffed with his or her hands behind the back, palms together. A single officer shall never transport two or more suspects in a non-caged vehicle unless directed by the on-duty supervisor.
3. If more than one officer transports prisoners in a non-caged vehicle, the following procedures shall be observed.
  - a. One officer shall position him or herself in the rear of the transporting vehicle behind the driver with the prisoner (seat belted) on the rear passenger side.
  - b. In a situation where more than one prisoner is transported by two officers in the same vehicle, the prisoners shall be

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positioned on the front and rear passenger side (seat belted) and the assisting officer should position himself behind the driver's seat in order to see the prisoners at all times and protect the driver.

4. Officers shall not under any circumstances transport prisoners who are restrained in a prone position. Doing so increases the risks of medical complications.

### F. Control of prisoners while transporting

#### Observation and Medical Assistance

1. During custody and transportation, officers shall continually observe the prisoner, even when it becomes necessary to allow the prisoner the use of a toilet.
2. If a prisoner appears lethargic, particularly after an active confrontation with officers, or appears unresponsive, immediate medical help may be necessary. Observe the suspect carefully and if the officer is in any doubt about the prisoner's health, summon medical assistance immediately. Officers should ask an apparently ill prisoner if he or she wishes medical assistance.
3. If a prisoner begins striking any portion of their head against any portion of the patrol vehicle or other object, officers are to restrain the prisoner as best possible and when safe to do so place protective head gear on the prisoner. Protective head gear will be placed on ALL subjects who strike their head, NO EXCEPTIONS. Officers shall place head protectors on any subject they feel may exhibit this behavior. Protective head gear must be placed on the prisoner and remain on until the prisoner is released to the jail.
4. The transporting officer shall advise the receiving officer or deputy of any medical conditions of the prisoner, or any suspicions or concerns about the prisoner's medical or mental health state.

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5. Prisoners shall not be left unattended at any time during transport with the exception of situations in Section G. below.

### G. Stopping to provide law enforcement services while transporting

1. When transporting a prisoner, the transporting officer shall provide law-enforcement services only when:
  - a. A need exists for the transporting officer to act immediately in order stop or prevent a violent act and prevent further harm to a victim.
  - b. A person has been injured and assistance is required immediately.
2. In all of the above situations, the transporting officer shall ensure at all times that the prisoner is secured and protected.
3. Under no circumstances shall an officer transporting a prisoner engage in a pursuit.

### H. Escape

If a prisoner escapes while being transported, the transporting officer shall observe the following procedures.

1. Request assistance immediately from the jurisdiction the officer is in at the time of the escape. The transporting officer shall immediately provide dispatch with the following information:
  - a. Location.
  - b. Direction and method of travel, and means of escape.
  - c. Name, physical description of escapee.

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- d. Possible weapons possessed by the escapee.
    - e. Pending charges.
  - 2. Try to recapture the escapee as soon as possible.
    - a. The transporting officer shall submit a written report to the chief of police as soon as practicable explaining the circumstances of the escape.
  - 3. Prisoner communication
    - a. The transporting officer shall not allow prisoners to communicate with other people while in transit unless the situation requires it. The officer shall use his or her judgment when deciding whether to allow a conversation to take place between the transported prisoner and another party.
- I. Arrival at destination

When transporting prisoners from one facility to another, upon arriving at the destination, the transporting officer shall observe the following procedures:

1. Firearms shall be secured in the designated place at the facility being entered. If there are none, secure firearms inside the locked trunk of the police vehicle.
2. Restraining devices shall be removed only when directed to do so by the receiving facility or when the officer is sure that the prisoner is properly controlled and secure.
3. The proper paperwork (booking sheet, property form, etc.) shall be submitted to the receiving facility and, in situations that require it,

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the officer shall ensure that proper signatures are obtained on paperwork to be returned to the department.

### J. Sick/injured prisoners and medical facilities

1. At any time before, during, or after the arrest that the prisoner is injured, becomes sick or complains of difficulty breathing/dizziness, the officer shall seek medical attention immediately. Medical attention shall be obtained before transporting the prisoner to the jail if the injury/sickness happens before arrival there.
2. The transporting officer shall use discretion in applying restraining devices on sick or injured prisoners. Obviously, if a prisoner is injured or sick enough to be incapacitated, restraining devices may not be appropriate. As a rule, do not remove a prisoner's handcuffs at the hospital unless ordered to do so by the attending physician.
3. If the prisoner refuses treatment, the prisoner shall be asked to sign a Medical Refusal or notation of such on a hospital release form. Have the attending physician or a nurse sign the form as witnesses. If the prisoner refuses to sign the form, obtain two witnesses to the refusal (hospital staff, another officer, or fire/rescue personnel). The form must be provided to the jail during booking.
4. If the prisoner must be admitted to the hospital, the officer shall release the prisoner only after consulting the on-duty supervisor. The supervisor, in turn, shall consult the magistrate. The supervisor shall observe the following procedures to ensure control of the prisoner:
  - a. If the prisoner is admitted and the prisoner was arrested for a felony, arrange for guards. Request the presence of a magistrate and arrange for the magistrate's transportation to the hospital so that bail can be set.

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- b. Assist the magistrate in arraigning the prisoner, if necessary, or stand by while the magistrate issues a warrant.
- c. Serve the warrant, if one has been issued. If the magistrate will not release the arrestee on personal recognizance, then maintain the guard until the prisoner makes bond or the case is filed. When the case is filed attempt to transfer responsibility to the Sheriff's Office.
- d. Until relieved by the sheriff's office, the supervisor shall brief every officer on the duties of guards and shall ensure that guards have radios.
- e. The supervisor shall ensure that guards are checked periodically and relieved as necessary until sheriff's deputies relieve them.
- f. The prisoner shall be kept under observation at all times and, normally, restraining devices shall be used. Officers shall consult with medical personnel concerning the use of restraining devices.

### K. Special transport problems

- 1. Transport of prisoner by officer of different sex than prisoner.
  - a. When transporting a prisoner of one sex by an officer of another sex, the vehicles MVR must be activated.
  - b. At a minimum the transporting officer shall:
    - i. Contact the dispatcher by radio and request the time and state the units mileage at the beginning of transport.

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- ii. Go directly to the destination by using the shortest practical route.
- iii. Upon arrival at the destination, contact the dispatcher by radio and request the time of arrival and state the units mileage at the end of transport.

### L. Prisoner with disabilities

1. When transporting a prisoner with disabilities, the transporting officer shall request help when needed to complete the transport conveniently, comfortably, and safely for both the prisoner and the officer. The officer may request the dispatcher to contact the fire department or ambulance for assistance in transporting. The transporting officer shall take whatever special equipment or medicine is necessary for the prisoner.
2. With a disabled person in custody, the transporting officer must use common sense. When the disability is such that no danger of escape or injury to the prisoner or officer exists, then restraining devices may be inappropriate.
3. Any wheelchairs, crutches, prosthetic devices, and medication shall be transported with, but not in the possession of, the prisoner.
4. Transportation of dangerous/security-risk prisoners. When a prisoner is considered dangerous or a security hazard, the receiving agency or the sheriff's courtroom security personnel shall be notified before the transport takes place in order to plan how best to minimize any chance of escape, or injury to the prisoner or anyone else.

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### M. Restraining devices

1. When prisoners are restrained during transport, the following procedures shall be followed unless circumstances require an alternate method.
  - a. A single prisoner shall be handcuffed with both hands behind his or her back.
  - b. Leg and waist belt restraints may also be used in order to minimize the risk of injury or escape.
  - c. Under no circumstances shall a prisoner be handcuffed to a part of the transport vehicle itself, such as the floor post, protective screen barrier, etc.
  - d. Officers shall use ankle shackles or plastic handcuffs to immobilize legs when transporting any prisoner that might pose an escape risk.

### N. Documentation

Officers shall document all prisoner transports and shall note any unusual circumstances or events in the arrest report. Officers shall document the circumstances of any apparently ill or injured prisoners and their medical treatment. Officers will give names (and badge numbers, as appropriate) of personnel from and to whom the prisoner was released or transferred.

Approved: *M. Shackelford*

M. Shackelford

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